

V. *Extracts of two Letters from the Reverend Mr Abraham de la Pryme, F. R. S, to the Publisher, concerning Subterraneous Trees, the Bitings of Mad Dogs, &c.*

Thorn, March 14. 170 $\frac{1}{2}$.

SInce I writ last unto you, I have had the good fortune to get two or three very considerable new Informations about the great Fir-trees that formerly grew in these Levels, which I thought not unworthy of communicating unto you. Being at *Hatfield* the other day, I was told by several Gentlemen, that about 20 years ago dy'd one *Saunderson* of that Town, aged near 80 years, whose Father, much of the same age, did frequently assure him, and other Gentlemen that were curious in the matter, that he could very well remember many hundreds of great Fir-trees, standing one here and another there, in a languishing decaying condition, half as high as Houses, and some higher, whose tops were all dead, yet their Boughs and Branches always green and flourishing, growing all of them in these Levels: And *John Hatfield* of *Hatfield*, Esq; Councillor at Law, who is not above 40 years of age, has by him a large Twig that his Father pluck'd off from the Sprout of a green and flourishing Shrub of Fir that grew from the great Root of one of the same kind in these Commons. And an old man of *Croul* tells me, that he has heard his Father say, that he could remember multitudes of Shrubs, and small Fir-trees growing here while this Country was a Chace, and while the Vert was preserv'd before the Drainage. And lastly, in many old Charters that I have seen of the Pious *Roger de Moubray*, Lord of *Axholm*, who lived in the year 13

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relating to *Hurst, Bellwood, Ross, Santoft, &c.* it appears that then all these places were cover'd with a great old decaying Forest or Wood ; and not them only, but also all that low Common between *Croul Causey* and *Authrop upon Trent* ; and tho there be not one stick of any such thing now to be seen, yet it is not only plainly manifest that the same was true from the Roots there found, but also from the said Roots, that most of the Trees that then grew there were Firs. All which were but the after-growth, and Relicts of the famous great Forest formerly described unto you, that was destroyed by the Conquering *Romans*. I heartily thank you for your great kindness, in convincing me that those Trees so oft before mentioned, are Fir-Trees, and not Pitch-Trees, which I call'd by the latter name in some of my Letters unto you ; that which led me into this Error was not only the Expressions of some famous Authors, who had not accurately enough distinguish'd the Trees ; but also the Deference that I would fain have had to the Honour of the most Famous Hero *Julius Caesar*, who so positively says that no Firs grow in *Britain* : tho indeed I might with reason have given as little heed to him in that, as to the next Tree that he mentions, to wit, the Beech, which he excludes also ; and which is so common in every part of this famous Nation.

Tborn, March, 27. 1702.

IT is certain that nothing advances Knowledge more than a reading and free Communication of what passes Curious in every part : So, tho many have writ *de Venenis* & *de his qui a Canibus Rabidis momorsi fuerunt*, as the Learned *Paræus, Donatus, Codronchus, &c.* and have communicated Relations of such to the Learned World ; yet give me leave to add another, that happened in the Family
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of one of the nearest Relations of mine in these parts, some few years ago, upon the bite of a Mad Dog, which may perhaps yield you some Speculations not unacceptable, and help to discover the subtilty of the Poison of those Creatures, and how it affects Man.

In 1695. my Brother had a pretty grey-hound Bitch that had Whelps; soon after came a Mad Dog and bit this Bitch unknown to the Family, upon which about 3 weeks after she run mad, and they were forced to kill her; but saving her Whelps, because that no sign of Madness appeared in them, in about 3 weeks more they all pull'd out one another's Throats except one, which escaping, my Brother's men valued and nourish'd, made much of it, and stroak'd it: at length, perceiving that it could not lap, nor swallow any liquid thing, they put their Fingers in its Mouth, and felt its Tongue and Throat, but finding nothing wrong therein as far as they could discover, they let it alone a day or two longer, and then it ran mad and dy'd.

They being thus dead were soon forgot, until that about 3 weeks after, my Brother's Servant, a most strong laborious Man, that had frequently put his Fingers into the Whelps mouth, begun to be troubled now and then with an exceeding acute pain in the Head, sometimes once, sometimes twice a day, so very vehement that he was forc'd to hold his Head with both his hands, to hinder it from riving in two, which fits commonly held him about an hour at a time, in which his Throat would contract, as he said, and his Pulse tremble, and his Eyes behold every thing of a fiery red colour. Thus was he tormented for a whole week together, but being of a strong constitution, and returning to his labour in every interval, he sweat and wrought it off, without any Physic.

But it went worse with one of his fellow Servants, a young Apprentice of about 14 years of age, who had made as much of the Whelp as he, but was not of so strong

strong a Constitution, he was seiz'd also with a pain in his Head, was somewhat Feverish, sometimes better, sometimes worse, cough'd much, had a good stomach, eat heartily, but could drink nothing. I know not what I ail, says he, I cannot swallow any Beer, &c. and so laugh'd at it. When he went out of door, tho there was but a little North Wind, yet he always ran as if it had been for his life ; when they ask'd him why he did so, he told them he could not tell—but that the Wind would needs stop his breath. A day or two after this he was worse, and vomited a strange nasty sort of Matter, like black Blood, which stunk like Sallet Oyl, but much stronger ; which he did several times ; after which he would be pretty well, and walk about, but most commonly ran as fast as ever he could, first out of one corner, then into another, then up stairs, then down again, as if it was for his life. But upon the third day of his confinement within doors he grew perfectly mad, would start, and leap, and twist his Hands and Arms together, point at people, and laugh and talk any thing that came in his Mind. In some of his fits he was so strong that he was too hard for four young men to hold him down in the Chair where he sat : but as soon as they were over he was lightsome, and laugh'd, and talk'd, but all his discourse was of fighting, and how if that they would but let him alone, he would leap upon them, and bite, and tear them to pieces : And when one said unto him, that he was sure that he would not hurt him, he'd been always his Friend ; he answered sharply that friends and foes were all alike to him, he'd tear them all in pieces, &c. About an hour after his fit came again, which soon made him speechless, seiz'd wholly upon his Brain, and then he dy'd just before the Physician came.

Sir, I will not here presume to search into the Particles of this Poyson, what figure they are of, and how they multiply, how they are able to infect a mass of other
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particles millions of times bigger than themselves, and destroy and dissolve those most curious Bodies that are so fearfully and so wonderfully made. Neither will I conjecture why they should lie so long, commonly 3 Weeks or a month, and oftentimes much longer, before that they begin to stir; why Water, or Beer, or any Cold Liquid is against them, &c. because that such things cannot certainly be known but by great Niceness, and repeated Labour and Inspection. 'Tis pity that the most Noble of Creatures lyes at the Mercy of the most ignoble of particles; and most wonderful that a few Atoms should be able to destroy a whole World, millions of times bigger than themselves.

Roger Moubray, mention'd in my last Letter, did not live in 1390, as I writ by mistake, but in 1100; so that what I said about some Reliques of old Forests of Fir then standing in these Levels, is more observable than I thought of.

V. *Part of a Letter from Mr Alex. Stuart, (a Physician) to the Publisher, concerning some Spouts he observed in the Mediterranean.*

S I R,

I Presume to send you the following Accompt of some Water-spouts (as they are commonly called) which I saw lately in the *Mediterranean Sea*.

The 27th of *August*, 1701. being upon the Coast of *Barbary*. to the Northward of the Town of *Bona*, upwards of 10 Leagues distance at Sea, about 7 a Clock at night, shortly after Sun-setting appeared in the N. E. (which was directly up the Gulf of *Lyons* from us) great and continued Flashes of Lightning one after another, without hardly any intermission,